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ABSTRACT

A survey of the personal, socioeconomic, and professional characteristics of the 100 men and women who served as President to the American Library Association (ALA) between 1876 and 1986 was undertaken to identify those socioeconomic and professional characteristics whose frequency distributions remained relatively constant for all 100 members of the club, and to identify those group characteristics whose frequency distributions changed over the 110-year period during which the group held office. A comparison of presidents from 1906 to 1925 with their counterparts from 1966 to 1985 shows a sharp contrast: the former individual was more likely to be white, male, married, and Protestant; somewhat more likely to be a Republican; and a graduate from a northeastern college or university but without formal library education; and the director of a nonpublic library in the northeast. By contrast, the latter individual was more likely to be white, married, and Protestant; somewhat more likely to be female and a Democrat; either from the midwest, the south, or the northeast, with an undergraduate degree from a midwestern or southern school; more likely to have a Ph.D. in library science; and to be directing a library school at the time of tenure. Despite the shifts evident in the last 20 years, the picture still shows significant gaps in representation of the association's membership in terms of both personal and professional characteristics. A list of the 100 former ALA presidents together with the dates that they held office is appended. (7 references) (EW)

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Members of the Club: A Look at One Hundred ALA Presidents

by

Wayne A. Wiegand
and
Dorothy Steffens

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Members of the Club:
A Look at One Hundred ALA Presidents

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INTRODUCTION

Beverly Lynch succeeded to the presidency of the American Library Association (ALA) in 1985 and thus entered the ranks of an elite club whose numbers reached 100 with her election. Such a milestone invites reflection and begs answers to an important question. Just what kinds of people have held the highest elective position the library profession has to offer? The question was especially tempting to the authors of this essay, one of whom had already accumulated a body of demographic data on ALA Executive Board and Council members holding office between 1876 and 1917.[1]

The task promised to be relatively simple—take the evidence on ALA presidents holding office between 1876 and 1917 and build this evidence into a larger body to cover all 100 presidents. Since variables included in previous statistical studies of such demographic data had already proved fruitful, the authors made a decision to extend these studies to other members of the club in order to assess characteristics of change and continuity.

Scholarship has repeatedly shown that collective biographical profiles of leaders of specific groups or professions can prove valuable as tools for understanding group activities. Assuming that a majority of any profession or group electing its leadership selects leaders whose public image accords with the group's perceived best interests, such profiles serve as a mirror of the image the group wishes to project to a larger world. In the recent past, several social historians have taken advantage of the computer's capacity to manipulate large amounts of nominal data in an attempt to discern typical and diverse characteristics of group members who had engaged in events or activities of historical note. In many cases their findings have been revealing.[2]

Library history, however, has still not seriously tapped the potential of this research technique. While several library historians have attempted to identify collective profiles of past library leaders, the value of their findings has been limited by the small samples they analyzed, by the limited number of variables they considered, or by a restricted model which tended to "freeze" the group for a limited period of time and did not account for the dynamics of change occurring over several decades.[3]

The study conducted here does not constitute research into massive amounts of data, but it does have two main objectives: (1) to identify those socioeconomic and professional characteristics whose frequency distributions remained relatively constant for all 100 members of the club; and (2) to identify those group characteristics whose frequency distributions changed over the 110-year period during which the group

held office. In order to accomplish these objectives, the authors constructed a code book which classified into 23 specific categories certain biographical data on the 100 ALA presidents. To measure constancy and change over time, they divided coverage into groups of ten presidents. Not all groups divide neatly into decades, however. The first group, for example, covers the years 1876-94. ALA's first president, Justin Winsor, occupied the office for ten years; William F. Poole was elected to succeed him for two terms; and Charles A. Cutter followed Poole for another two-year period.

The bibliographical data used here were derived mostly from sketches included in the *Dictionary of American Library Biography (DALB)* and its forthcoming *Supplement*.[4] In addition, the bibliographies which followed each sketch proved invaluable in identifying primary source materials which yielded substantial additional biographical details not included in the published sketches.[4]

The authors also designed a survey to obtain details directly from living ALA presidents (and not covered in *DALB* or its forthcoming *Supplement*).[5] All ALA presidents responded, although several chose not to include information on specific categories they considered personal, like religion and political affiliation.

From this body of data the authors narrowed the field of variables from 23 to 12 categories, in large part because 11 of the categories did not contain enough information to promise verifiable conclusions. Variables retained include: (1) gender composition; (2) race; (3) marital status; (4) politics; (5) religion; (6) place of birth by geographic region; (7) highest nonlibrary degree earned; (8) regional location of institution granting nonlibrary degree; (9) terminal library degree earned; (10) administrative position held while ALA president; (11) type of library employing ALA president; and (12) geographic region of employer when ALA president.

GENDER COMPOSITION

Frequency distributions for ALA presidents distinguished by gender supports conventional historical wisdom (see table 1). Since its organization in 1876, 75 of its 100 presidents have been male, despite the fact that the membership has shown substantial female majorities since the turn of the century. Not until 1911, 35 years after organizing, did a woman hold the presidency. Between 1907 and 1966, in fact, ALA elected 46 men and only 14 women to the presidency. Before 1966, 83% (66 out of 80) of the people

TABLE 1
GENDER

Years	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
1876-1894	10	0	10
1895-1905	10	0	10
1906-1915	8	2	10
1916-1925	9	1	10
1926-1935	7	3	10
1936-1945	8	2	10
1946-1955	7	3	10
1956-1965	7	3	10
1966-1975	5	5	10
1976-1986	4	6	10
Total	75	25	100

occupying the office of ALA president were male. This percentage may seem somewhat familiar to readers but in an unusual way. It represents a reverse reflection of the gender composition of an ALA membership which, for much of this century, has hovered around 80% female and 20% male.

Since 1966, however, gender composition has shown a significant shift. Eleven of ALA's last 20 presidents (55%) have been women, and 6 of the last 10 (60%). Whether this suggests a trend toward greater parity with gender composition of the membership in general remains to be seen. Prior to 1966, however, the image being projected to the rest of the world through the gender composition of the ALA presidency was consistent—mostly men have been elected to represent a profession dominated by women.

RACIAL COMPOSITION

The racial composition of ALA's presidents shows almost no change (see table 2). Although the authors originally identified five categories of ethnic heritage as potentially useful, they quickly realized as data were being collected that they would have to condense their categories into two—white and nonwhite. Even when this step was taken, however, lack of diversity was still striking—98 of ALA presidents were white; only 2 were nonwhite and both of them were black. An analysis of the years during which these blacks held office shows the recency of this development. Before 1976 only whites occupied the office. Since 1976, two of ten (20%) ALA presidents have been black. Perhaps one should not consider this

TABLE 2
RACE

Years	*White*	*Black*	*Total*
1876-1894	10	0	10
1895-1905	10	0	10
1906-1915	10	0	10
1916-1925	10	0	10
1926-1935	10	0	10
1936-1945	10	0	10
1946-1955	10	0	10
1956-1965	10	0	10
1966-1975	10	0	10
1976-1986	8	2	10
Total	98	2	100

percentage unusual—at least for the last 10 years—when matched against the percentage of black ALA members, but it does tend to mask the fact that people of Hispanic, Oriental, and Native American heritage (to name but a few ethnic minorities among the ALA membership), have not yet been represented in the ALA presidency. From frequency distributions on this variable, one can conclude that the image of the profession being projected to the rest of the world through the race of the ALA president was consistent—whites have been elected to represent the profession.

MARITAL STATUS

The "marital status" variable shows slightly more diversity (see table 3). Although the authors were not able to determine marital status for 4 of the 100 ALA presidents under study, they have determined that 80% were married. Before 1925, 35 of 40 (88%) ALA presidents were married. Between 1926 and 1945 these numbers changed slightly—13 of 20 (65%) ALA presidents were married. Between 1946 and 1965 the percentages jumped back to 90% but since 1966 have dropped to 70%. Again, the image projected to a larger population through the ALA presidency has been fairly consistent—the vast majority have been married.

Some different results occur when one breaks marital status down by gender, however (see table 3a). When all members of the club are considered, statistics show that only 2 of the 81 males (3%) occupying the ALA presidency were unmarried; 13 of the 25 females (52%) occupying that office were unmarried. Of those known to be single at the time they held the ALA

TABLE 3
MARITAL STATUS

Years	*Married*	*Single*	*Unknown*	*Total*
1876-1894	9	1	0	10
1895-1905	10	0	0	10
1906-1915	7	2	1	10
1916-1925	9	1	0	10
1926-1935	7	3	0	10
1936-1945	6	2	2	10
1946-1955	8	2	0	10
1956-1965	10	0	0	10
1966-1975	7	3	0	10
1976-1986	7	2	1	10
Total	80	16	4	100

TABLE 3a
MARITAL STATUS BY GENDER

Marital Status	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Married	69	11	80
Single	2	14	16
Unknown	4	0	4
Total	75	25	100

presidency 90% were women. When broken down into groups of ten, variations for married and unmarried women over time are evident. Before 1925, two of the three women who were ALA presidents were married. Between 1926 and 1945, all five women holding the presidency were unmarried. Since 1946 all seven unmarried ALA presidents have been women or just under 40% of the total number of women occupying that office since the end of World War II. Again, the statistics surfacing from these variables show that the image of the profession being projected to the rest of the world through the marital status of the ALA president was that the profession has preferred to elect males who were married, but has not expected the same from its female presidents.

POLITICS

An analysis of political loyalties also reveals certain tendencies (see table 4). The most striking is a discernible inclination to avoid declaring allegiance to a political party. This quickly became evident when accumulating historical data on ALA presidents who have died; it was reinforced in surveys designed to obtain data from those still alive. The authors could find no information on political preferences for 60 of the 100 ALA presidents under study. Throughout recent history, the profession seems to have followed an unwritten rule not to identify with political parties. This practice has most often been rationalized as a necessary check to counter potential accusations against the library's traditionally neutral position.

Still, some inferences can be drawn from existing data, spotty though it is. ALA presidents who did identify political loyalties roughly divided between Republicans and Democrats; only three declared themselves outside the mainstream of American politics. Proportionately, women were much more likely to be Democrat (7 of 9 declared) than men (13 of 31 declared), but most of this is evident in figures since 1957 (see table 4a). Between 1916 and 1925 ALA presidents were more likely to declare themselves Republican; between 1956 and 1975 they were more likely to declare themselves Democrat. In fact, in the latter 20-year period 14 of 20 ALA presidents declared themselves Democrat, none Republican.

TABLE 4
POLITICS

Years	*Republican*	*Democrat*	*Independent*	*Progressive*	*Unknown*	*Total*
1876-1894	2	0	0	0	8	10
1895-1905	1	0	0	1	8	10
1906-1915	2	0	0	0	8	10
1916-1925	4	0	1	0	5	10
1926-1935	3	1	0	0	6	10
1936-1945	2	1	0	0	7	10
1946-1955	2	2	0	0	6	10
1956-1965	0	8	0	0	2	10
1966-1975	0	6	1	0	3	10
1976-1986	1	2	0	0	7	10
Total	17	20	2	1	60	100

Comparing these two periods of open declaration against the norm of no declaration may be instructive. The 1920s were a period of strong Republican control of the federal government. The 1960s belonged to the Democrats who passed Great Society programs that ushered in what librarians perceived was a period of substantial growth in the American library community. For each time period, ALA members who thought about it may have believed that the association would not damage its best interests by electing someone to the presidency who made no secret of political loyalties. This "courage," however, was obviously biased toward the ruling party. The authors were able to find information on party loyalties for only 3 of the last 10 ALA presidents. This may represent a return to the stance of public political neutrality so evident before 1956.

TABLE 4a
POLITICS BY GENDER

Party	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Republican	16	1	17
Democrat	13	7	20
Independent	1	1	2
Progressive	1	0	1
Unknown	44	16	60
Total	75	25	100

RELIGION

ALA presidents appeared to be less reluctant to identify their religion (see table 5) than their politics. The authors were not able to identify religious affiliations for 35 of the 100 presidents covered; and of these 35, numbers are generally greater for the years before 1915 and between 1936 and 1965 (47% of the total in each category). The authors were able to find information on religious affiliation for only 4 of the last 10 ALA presidents. Perhaps these numbers are only coincidental.

The vast majority of those about whom the authors were able to obtain information were Protestant. ALA did not elect its first known non-Protestant until 1912; it did not elect its first non-Christian until 1956. Among its 100 presidents, the authors have determined that ALA has elected 4 who were Roman Catholic (3 in the last decade), and 2 who were Jewish (both since 1956). Comparing these figures and percentages against the rest of the population over time reflects obvious differences.

When broken down by gender, the results are similar (see table 5a). Protestants account for 42 of the 45 (93%) male presidents for whom religious loyalties have been identified; 2 have been Catholic and 1 Jewish. Protestants account for 17 of 20 (85%) female presidents for whom religious loyalties have been identified; 2 have been Catholic and 1 Jewish. When considered together, the image of the profession being projected to the rest of the world through the religious loyalties of ALA presidents has been that the profession greatly favored Protestants.

TABLE 5
RELIGION

Years	*Protestant*	*Catholic*	*Jewish*	*Unknown*	*Total*
1876-1894	5	0	0	5	10
1895-1905	5	0	0	5	10
1906-1915	5	1	0	4	10
1916-1925	9	0	0	1	10
1926-1935	9	0	0	1	10
1936-1945	6	0	0	4	10
1946-1955	5	0	0	5	10
1956-1965	5	0	1	4	10
1966-1975	8	0	0	2	10
1976-1986	2	3	1	4	10
Total	59	4	2	35	100

TABLE 5a
RELIGION BY GENDER

Religion	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Protestant	42	17	59
Catholic	2	2	4
Jewish	1	1	2
Unknown	30	5	35
Total	75	25	100

PLACE OF BIRTH BY GEOGRAPHIC REGION

Identifying place of birth was an easy variable on which to accumulate data, although these data may not be very instructive (see table 6). Perhaps their chief use is as a reflection on some natural changes which follow general population trends. For example, before 1915 a sizable majority (65%) of ALA presidents were born in the Northeast. Between 1926 and 1945 the Midwest produced the most numbers (60%), while between 1946 and 1975 the South showed some surprising gains (47% of the total). Only 5 of ALA's 100 presidents were born in the West—1 fewer than those born outside the United States.

While the authors will discuss geographic region of employers of ALA presidents later in the essay, perhaps this is a more appropriate place to examine birthplace against employer location to test the geographic mobility of ALA presidents (see table 6a).[6] Of the 38 ALA presidents born in the Northeast, 21 were still there (57%), 10 had moved to the Midwest, 1 had gone to the South (Washington, D.C.—and thus the Librarian of Congress—has been placed in this category), and 5 to the West. Of the 16 ALA presidents born in the South, only 6 stayed (38%), 4 ended up in the Northeast, 4 in the Midwest; none went West. Of the 5 ALA presidents born in the West, only one stayed. Two went to the South, and 1 went to the Northeast. Over time, then, an ALA member was more likely to be elected president if he or she was a native Northeasterner occupying a library post there; an ALA member had a reasonable chance of gaining the presidency if he or she was a native Northeasterner or Southerner occupying a post in

TABLE 6
PLACE OF BIRTH GEOGRAPHIC REGION

Years	*Northeast*	*Midwest*	*South*	*West*	*International*	*Unknown*	*Total*
1876-1894	6	1	0	1	2	0	10
1895-1905	8	2	0	0	0	0	10
1906-1915	5	4	0	0	1	0	10
1916-1925	7	3	0	0	0	0	10
1926-1935	1	5	1	1	2	0	10
1936-1945	1	7	1	0	0	1	10
1946-1955	2	3	5	0	0	0	10
1956-1965	2	2	4	2	0	0	10
1966-1975	3	2	5	0	0	0	10
1976-1986	3	4	0	1	1	1	10
Total	38	33	16	5	6	2	100

TABLE 6a

PLACE OF BIRTH GEOGRAPHIC REGION BY GEOGRAPHIC REGION OF EMPLOYER LIBRARY WHILE ALA PRESIDENT

Region	*Northeast*	*Midwest*	*South*	*West*	*International*	*Unknown*	*Total*
Northeast	21	11	4	1	2	1	40
Midwest	10	13	4	0	4	0	31
South	1	4	6	2	0	0	13
West	5	4	0	1	0	0	10
Unknown	1	1	2	1	0	1	6
Total	38	33	16	5	6	2	100

either region respectively. If an ALA member was from the West, however, and the ALA presidency constituted a professional goal, he or she was better off moving east of the Mississippi.

HIGHEST NONLIBRARY DEGREE EARNED

As a group, the ALA presidents show impressive numbers in educational degrees earned outside librarianship; 81 of the 92 for whom we could find data had a bachelor's degree or better (see table 7). Nearly 60% had a bachelor's as the highest nonlibrary degree, almost 30% had earned a nonlibrary science master's degree, while 6 had earned a nonlibrary science doctorate. The club could also claim three lawyers, one doctor, and one minister among its membership. When viewed over time, relatively little change has occurred since the beginning of the 20th century. These data suggest that the ALA membership has generally not required successful candidates for president to possess nonlibrary postbaccalaureate degrees.

This picture did not change significantly when authors separated degree by gender (see table 7a). Before 1915, eight people served as ALA president without undergraduate degrees; six of these were men. Neither of the female ALA presidents before 1916 had earned undergraduate degrees. Later, however, women were almost as likely as men to possess the baccalaureate as a terminal nonlibrary degree. Of 23 women occupying the ALA presidency after 1916, 16 had undergraduate degrees (70% of the total) as the highest nonlibrary degree earned; 37 of 47 men occupying the ALA presidency after 1916 (79% of the total) possessed undergraduate degrees as the highest nonlibrary degree earned.

TABLE 7
Highest Nonlibrary Degree Earned

Years	*Grade*	*High*	*Normal*	*Undergrad*	*MA Non-MLS*	*Ph.D.*	*Physician*	*Divinity*	*Law*	*Unknown*	*Total*
1876-1894	0	1	1	2	3	1	0	1	0	1	10
1895-1905	0	3	0	4	2	0	1	0	0	0	10
1906-1915	2	1	0	4	1	1	0	0	0	1	10
1916-1925	0	1	0	4	2	0	0	0	1	2	10
1926-1935	0	1	1	4	2	1	0	0	1	0	10
1936-1945	0	0	0	5	3	0	0	0	1	1	10
1946-1955	0	0	0	5	4	0	0	0	0	1	10
1955-1965	0	0	0	6	2	1	0	0	0	1	10
1966-1975	0	0	0	7	2	1	0	0	0	0	10
1976-1986	0	0	0	7	1	1	0	0	0	1	10
Total	2	7	2	48	22	6	1	1	3	8	100

TABLE 7a
HIGHEST NONLIBRARY DEGREE EARNED BY GENDER

Degree	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Grade	0	2	2
High	6	1	7
Normal	1	1	2
Undergrad	32	16	48
MA non-MLS	19	3	22
Ph.D.	5	1	6
Physician	1	0	1
Divinity	1	0	1
Law	3	0	3
Unknown	7	1	8
Total	75	25	100

When one combines undergraduate with graduate degrees, the percentages jump for both sexes. After 1916, 40 of 47 men (85%) who were ALA presidents had a baccalaureate degree or better; 19 of 23 women had either a baccalaureate degree or better as their terminal nonlibrary degree. Drawing conclusions from these data is difficult, but one can infer that among those women elected to the ALA presidency, it does not appear that they needed larger numbers of degrees, nor more degrees above the baccalaureate, than men.

REGIONAL LOCATION OF INSTITUTION GRANTING NONLIBRARY DEGREE

From what regional colleges and universities were these terminal nonlibrary degrees earned (see table 8)? Eleven members of the club did not graduate from college, and the authors have not been able to locate data for another eight. Analysis of the location of alma maters for the 81 remaining ALA presidents reveals no surprising patterns. Before 1925, Northeast colleges predominate (20 of 27 degrees or 74%), as might be expected. After 1926, they account for only 11 of 54 degrees (or 20%). Between 1926 and 1945, Midwest colleges and universities could claim large numbers of ALA presidents among their alumni (9 of 17 or 53%). Between 1946 and 1975, 11 (or just over one-third of the total) possessed degrees from colleges and universities located in the South. Prior to 1945 only 2 of the 60 ALA presidents held southern degrees. Only eight ALA presidents graduated from colleges and universities located in the West. Between 1956 and 1965

their numbers reached 3 of the total 10; one other decade shows 2, but most show 1 or none.

TABLE 8
REGION OF LOCATION OF INSTITUTION GRANTING NONLIBRARY DEGREE

Years	*Northeast*	*Midwest*	*South*	*West*	*Unknown*	*Total*
1876-1894	5	2	0	0	3	10
1895-1905	6	1	0	0	3	10
1906-1915	4	1	0	1	4	10
1916-1925	5	2	0	0	3	10
1926-1935	2	4	1	1	2	10
1936-1945	1	5	1	2	1	10
1946-1955	3	0	5	1	1	10
1956-1965	1	2	4	3	0	10
1966-1975	2	4	4	0	0	10
1976-1986	3	3	3	0	1	10
Total	32	24	18	8	18	100

TERMINAL LIBRARY DEGREE EARNED

That library education became more important over time is evident from the table showing library education degrees (see table 9). It is likely that less than half of the 100 had any formal library education. The authors could find no data for 8 members of the club; they do know that 44 of the 92 (48%) for whom data are available had no formal library education, and that most of these (40 of 50 or 80%) occurred during ALA's first half-century. After 1926, the varieties of library education begin to show in the statistics. The authors coded several categories, including certificates issued for summer programs and extension work; the bachelor of library science degree programs manifest in most library schools of the 1930s and 1940s; the fifth- and sixth-year degree programs which both represented and correspond to the contemporary master's degree in library science; and finally, the Ph.D. in library science. Since 1936, only four people became ALA presidents without formal library science education, and the authors could find no reliable data on five others. Thus, in the past half century, 41 of 50 (or 82%) had formal library education.

When broken down into categories and analyzed over time, interesting patterns emerge. For example, between 1926 and 1975 large numbers (19 of the 35 or 54% of those who had formal library education) held the BLS as a

TABLE 9
Terminal Library Degree Earned

Years	*None*	*Certificate*	*BLS Program*	*Sixth-Year MA*	*Fifth-Year MA*	*Ph.D.*	*Extension*	*Unknown*	*Total*
1876-1894	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
1895-1905	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
1906-1915	8	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	10
1916-1925	6	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	10
1926-1935	6	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	10
1936-1945	1	2	5	0	0	0	0	2	10
1946-1955	1	2	4	2	0	1	0	0	10
1956-1965	1	0	2	2	0	3	0	2	10
1966-1975	1	0	5	2	0	2	0	0	10
1976-1986	0	0	1	1	1	6	0	1	10
Total	44	5	21	8	1	12	1	8	100

terminal degree. During that same period only six held fifth- or sixth-year degrees, and six held the Ph.D. This is surprising insofar as the profession in 1951 publicly declared that the master's degree in library science was considered the profession's terminal degree. Yet it does not appear that ALA wanted to elect people who held only that library degree. Since 1946 the membership has elected 11 people who possess the Ph.D. in library science to its presidency, but only 9 who have had the equivalent of a master's degree in library science. One might conclude from these figures that the membership prefers to elect holders of the doctorate degree over holders of the master's degree. Perhaps it says something about the image the profession subconsciously projected to the rest of the world through its ALA presidents; perhaps it also influences membership selection of one of the two candidates pursuing the ALA presidency.

Gender composition of formal library education degree holders also shows some significant differences (see table 9a). The authors have determined that 20 of the 25 women ALA presidents had formal library education. Seven (or 35%) had completed a BLS program, four the equivalent of an MLS, and six a Ph.D. All but 3 of the 25, of course, held office after 1926. We also know that 28 of the 75 male ALA presidents had formal library education, 26 of whom held the ALA presidency after 1926. Between 1926 and 1985, 14 of the 38 (37%) held BLS degrees, 5 the equivalent of an MLS, and 6 the Ph.D. On the surface, then, it appears that the ALA membership made no distinction by gender about the formal library degrees of the people it elected president. It did, however, make distinctions by degree and after 1966 clearly favored the Ph.D.

TABLE 9a
TERMINAL LIBRARY DEGREE EARNED BY GENDER

Degree	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
None	42	2	44
Certificate	3	2	5
BLS Program	14	7	21
Sixth-Year MA	4	4	8
Fifth-Year MA	1	0	1
Ph.D.	6	6	12
Extension	0	1	1
Unknown	5	3	8
Total	75	25	100

Throughout ALA's history, the library press has repeatedly reflected membership concern for different library settings. Major areas of controversy about candidates for the ALA presidency have tended to focus on the library position held in an administrative hierarchy, the type of library employing the candidate, and the geographic location of the library at which the position was held. Statistics show definite areas of emphasis.

ADMINISTRATIVE POSITION HELD WHILE PRESIDENT

Over the years the vast majority of ALA presidents have been directors of whatever library unit employed them (see table 10). During no decade has this number dropped below 70%. ALA members appear to want their presidents to be the head of a large library institution or a library education program. ALA candidates for the presidency who were not chief executive officers of the institution employing them had only three chances in ten of becoming president. And this percentage has decreased to two in ten in the past 30 years. Reference librarians, catalogers, music librarians, rare books specialists, children's librarians, and department heads (to name only a few working within a library hierarchy instead of on top of it) are, for the most part, unrepresented among members of the club.

Only in the decade between 1907 and 1916, when ALA was undergoing significant changes brought about by several political battles, did these numbers differ significantly.[7] Before 1956, 54 of 70 (77%) ALA presidents

TABLE 10
ADMINISTRATIVE POSITION HELD WHILE ALA PRESIDENT

Years	*Director*	*Administrator*	*Other*	*Library Educator*	*Library Press*	*Unknown*	*Total*
1876-1894	9	0	0	1	0	0	10
1895-1905	10	0	0	0	0	0	10
1906-1915	5	2	1	1	0	1	10
1916-1925	8	0	1	1	0	0	10
1926-1935	6	2	0	2	0	0	10
1936-1945	9	0	0	0	0	1	10
1946-1955	7	0	1	0	0	2	10
1956-1965	5	1	0	2	0	2	10
1966-1975	6	0	0	4	0	0	10
1976-1986	4	2	0	2	1	1	10
Total	69	7	3	13	1	7	100

were directors of some type of library institution. After 1957, however, those figures change. The percentages drop to 50 (15 of 30), while the percentage for directors or deans of library schools increases from 7 (5 of 70) to 30 (9 of 30). The latter figures are significant, given the relatively low numbers of library educators in the total ALA membership.

If the analysis of the past 100 ALA presidents is further extended by dividing categories by gender, certain patterns surface (see table 10a). Ten of the 69 (15%) library directors who were members of the club were women. Three of seven (43%) at lower levels of the administrative hierarchy who were ALA presidents were women. Nine of 13 (69%) of the library school deans or directors who held office were women.

TABLE 10a
ADMINISTRATIVE POSITION HELD WHILE ALA PRESIDENT BY GENDER

Position	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Director	58	11	69
Administrator	4	3	7
Other	3	0	3
Library Educator	5	8	13
Library Press	1	0	1
Unknown	4	3	7
Total	75	25	100

Librarians have often grumbled about control of ALA by professionals representing certain types of library institutions. An analysis of types of libraries employing ALA presidents suggests that these complaints may be well-founded (see table 11). First, nearly half the members of the club have been public librarians, an employment category which has greatly outpaced its nearest rivals. Public librarians have outnumbered academic librarians by 2.6 to 1 and library educators by 3 to 1. Clearly they have dominated the ALA presidency over the years.

A combination of academic librarians and library educators accounts for another one-third of the total members of the club. Given their proportional representations in the membership, it is surprising that the former are so few, the latter so many. But these numbers are still important. When added to the category of public librarians, the three groups account for more than three-fourths of the presidents.

TABLE 11
Type of Library Employing ALA President

Library	1876-1894	1895-1905	1906-1915	1916-1925	1926-1935	1936-1945	1946-1955	1956-1965	1966-1975	1976-1986	Total
Public	7	6	6	4	6	4	4	3	3	2	45
Academic	1	1	1	2	1	3	3	3	1	1	17
Special	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Library Education	1	0	1	2	2	0	0	2	4	3	15
State Library	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Public Lib. Commission	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
National	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	3
Private/ Mercantile	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
High School	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
State Historical	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Federal Library	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
State Agency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Unknown	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	1	0	1	7
Total	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	100

The remaining categories are almost inconsequential. ALA presidents employed as special librarians, public library commission or state historical society directors, state library agency directors, national or federal library directors, directors of private research or mercantile libraries, or school librarians do not cumulate to 20% of the total. Especially striking is the almost total lack of representation among school librarians, who constitute a majority of librarians today. (Admittedly, school librarians have enjoyed some representation by ALA presidents who were library educators with teaching and research expertise in school librarianship, but even with these small numbers taken into consideration, the lack of representation is still striking.)

Even when broken down by decade, each of the categories shows relative consistency over time, at least until recently. Public librarians account for at least four of the ALA presidents in each decade up to 1965. Thereafter they have placed three in each group of ten. Academic librarians started out slow, enjoying representation in no more than one for each of the group of ten up through 1936, except for the years 1916 to 1925, when two academic librarians were elected. For the next three decades they placed three in each group of ten. Since 1966, however, they have had only two representatives in the club. If the numbers of public librarians have dropped in the last 30 years, and the numbers of academic librarians have been sparse in the last 20, the slack has clearly been taken up by library educators who have accounted for 9 of the last 30 ALA presidents (30%). In the decade between 1966 and 1975, library education accounted for four of the ten ALA presidencies.

Gender breakdown by library type shows similar patterns (see table 11a). Nine of the 45 public librarians holding the ALA presidency (20%) were women. Two of the seventeen academic library members of the club (12%) were women. Nine of the fifteen library school directors holding that office (60%) were women. The trend in these numbers is clear. A female ALA member was more likely to be elected ALA president if she was a library school director than if she was a public librarian and much more likely to be elected than if she was an academic librarian. The latter category should not be surprising however. The high profile academic library posts were generally closed to women for the entire period under review. As long as ALA members insisted on electing chief executive officers of library institutions, they had a very limited pool of female candidates in the academic library community from which to choose.

TABLE 11a
TYPE OF LIBRARY EMPLOYING ALA PRESIDENT BY GENDER

Library	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Public	37	8	45
Academic	15	2	17
Special	1	0	1
Library Education	6	9	15
State Library	1	0	1
Public Lib. Com.	1	1	2
National	2	1	3
Private Mercantile	4	0	4
High School	1	0	1
State Historical	1	0	1
Federal Library	1	1	2
State Agency	1	0	1
Unknown	4	3	7
Total	75	25	100

GEOGRAPHIC REGION OF EMPLOYER WHILE PRESIDENT

On no other issue has the ALA membership shown more disagreement, and on no other issue has compromise been more necessary, than the geographic location of library institutions employing nominees for the ALA presidents (see table 12). Over time, the Northeast claimed 40% of the total, the Midwest just over 30%, while the South and West could claim numbers of 13% and 10% respectively. Representation of regions has shown movement over time but not in proportion to numbers and certainly not in proportion to numbers in the West.

TABLE 12
GEOGRAPHIC REGION OF EMPLOYER WHILE ALA PRESIDENT

Years	*Northeast*	*Midwest*	*South*	*West*	*Unknown*	*Total*
1876-1894	6	4	0	0	0	10
1895-1905	6	3	0	1	0	10
1906-1915	5	3	0	1	1	10
1916-1925	3	4	1	2	0	10
1926-1935	3	6	0	0	1	10
1936-1945	4	2	1	2	1	10
1946-1955	3	4	2	1	0	10
1956-1965	3	1	3	1	2	10
1966-1975	4	1	4	1	0	10
1976-1986	3	3	2	1	1	10
Total	40	31	13	10	6	100

In ALA's early years it was necessary to move the presidency around the country, in part to prevent the rise of regional library associations which ALA apparently considered a threat to its existence. This practice is evident in the statistics; before 1916, the Northeast did not show the kind of dominance in this as in other categories discussed previously. Up through World War I, it regularly showed bare majorities; thereafter, it enjoyed a plurality only once (1936-45). The Midwest regularly showed strength throughout. Before 1965 it averaged 3.7 presidents per decade; its representation was as low as two for the years 1936-45, and as high as six for the years 1926-35. Between 1956 and 1975 the Midwest had only two representatives, but it has shown growth in the last decade by numbering three of the last ten. Taken together, the Midwest and Northeast clearly dominated the ALA presidency until 1955.

Thereafter, however, the membership began to elect ALA presidents from the South in increasing numbers. Since 1956 the South has claimed 9 of 30 members of the club (30%). This number also accounts for 69% of Southerners elected to the ALA presidency.

While the numbers of ALA presidents coming from the Northeast, the Midwest, and the South have tended toward parity in recent decades, the West continues to receive light treatment by the ALA membership. Only twice during the period under study did the West have more than two of its people elected to the ALA presidency in one decade (1916-25; 1936-45). Even during the last 40 years the region could claim no more than one member of the club per decade (or 10% of the total), an average hardly proportionate to the total membership located there.

These patterns show little difference when library location is broken down by gender (see table 12a). Five of 35 members (14%) of the club located in the Northeast were women. The Midwest claimed 8 women among its 23 ALA

TABLE 12a
GEOGRAPHIC REGION OF EMPLOYER WHILE ALA PRESIDENT BY GENDER

Region	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Northeast	35	5	40
Midwest	23	8	31
South	6	7	13
West	7	3	10
Unknown	4	2	6
Total	75	25	100

presidents (35%), while the West shows 3 of 10 (30%). Only from the South did female ALA presidents outnumber males (7 of 13 or 54%). Because women were not elected to the ALA presidency in large numbers until recent decades, it is understandable that the percentages would be higher for those regions showing most gains since the mid-1960s.

CONCLUSION

This study was undertaken: (1) to identify those socioeconomic and professional characteristics whose frequency distributions remained relatively constant for all 100 members of the club, and (2) to identify those group characteristics whose frequency distributions changed during the 110-year period during which they held office. Variables isolated here have identified those characteristics, but by themselves they do not highlight the significant shifts that have taken place since 1966. To demonstrate these shifts more precisely, it will be useful to compare the profile of the "typical" ALA president holding office between 1906 and 1925 with his counterpart between 1966 and 1985.

The former was a married white male Protestant born in the Northeast and somewhat likely to be a Republican. He held at least an undergraduate degree from a college or university in the Northeast but had no formal library education. He directed a library in the Northeast; more likely than not it was a public library. Between 1906 and 1925 this was the image the ALA membership was projecting to the rest of the world through the person it had elected president.

The latter was a married white Protestant, somewhat likely to be a female Democrat. She was born in the Midwest, although it was almost as likely she was born in the South or Northeast. She held at least an undergraduate degree from a college or university either in the South or Midwest. She was also more likely to hold the Ph.D. in library science as her terminal degree. She earned her living by directing a library school. Between 1966 and 1985 this was the image the ALA membership was projecting to the rest of the world through the person it had elected president.

The contrast between the two profiles is significant and reflects the striking changes which have taken place since the mid-1960s. Before that time, the ALA presidency mirrored a WASP patriarchy of library directors from the Midwest and Northeast, despite the fact that the profession which the office represented was much more diverse demographically. For the last generation, however, more constituencies have found representation in the pro-

fessional and personal characteristics of the leadership evident in the ALA presidency.

Certainly the numbers show progress toward parity representation with the membership, but when matched against the years in which they occurred, they nonetheless appear to be generally about 10 to 20 years behind the social movements for which they are evidence. Thus, it seems fair to conclude that the American Library Association has not been in the vanguard of social change at any time in its history.

Despite shifts evident in the last 20 years, however, the picture painted here still shows significant gaps. In terms of personal characteristics, why hasn't the profession elected more women, more blacks, some Hispanics, Orientals, or Native Americans? Why is the membership so reluctant to ask its candidates to declare openly their political preferences? Does ALA want its male presidents married, but does not care about its females? Why does it seem to make a difference? Is something preventing the membership from nominating candidates for the presidency who openly admit to nonheterosexual preferences? Why doesn't the membership elect people from the West in greater numbers? By not electing representatives of these groups, is the perspective on the profession delivered through the ALA presidency somewhat biased toward a dominant culture and away from groups traditionally discriminated against? And by not having these groups represented at the top, is it possible that priorities in librarianship are being structured by professionals who do not adequately understand the information needs *and* wants of underrepresented groups?

In terms of professional characteristics, why hasn't the membership broken a virtual headlock on the ALA presidency by a combination of forces in the public, academic, and library education communities? Why isn't the school library community represented outside a small circle of library educators who teach and research in that area of professional endeavor? Does the profession's apparent propensity for electing people with post-MLS degrees create obstacles for those whose career patterns don't require it? Does this in part explain why the membership tends not to elect a prominent school librarian, music librarian, cataloger, reference librarian, rare books specialist, data services librarian, government documents specialist, etc.? Or how about prominent special librarians or information scientists? By not having these groups represented, is the perspective on the profession delivered through the ALA presidency biased toward a dominant professional elite of library managers and away from groups of professionals whose interests may not always get a fair hearing at the top? And by not having these groups represented there, is it possible

that the priorities of the library profession are being structured by a group of library leaders whose agendas are significantly different from those working lower levels of the library hierarchies?

The authors do not propose answers to these questions, but they do believe that accumulating and manipulating the data which led to these questions has been instructive and holds much potential for informing the profession about the image it projects to the rest of the world. Certainly the authors have not exhausted all the possibilities for manipulating the demographic data, even for the relatively small amount that constitutes the foundation for this study. Perhaps future library cliometricians can build upon this study when ALA elects its 120th, 130th, 140th, and 150th presidents.

APPENDIX

Members of the Club
One Hundred ALA Presidents

	Year	*President*
1.	1876-1885, 1897	Justin Winsor
2.	1885-1887	William F. Poole
3.	1887-1889	Charles Ammi Cutter
4.	1889-1890	Frederick M. Crunden
5.	1890-1891, 1892-1893	Melvil Dewey
6.	1891	Samuel Swett Green
7.	1891	K. August Linderfelt
8.	1891-1892	William Isaac Fletcher
9.	1893-1894	Josephus N. Larned
10.	1894-1895	Henry M. Utley
11.	1895-1896	John Cotton Dana
12.	1896-1897	William Howard Brett
13.	1898, 1903-1904	Herbert Putnam
14.	1898-1899	William Coolidge Lane
15.	1899-1900	Reuben Gold Thwaites
16.	1900-1901	Henry J. Carr
17.	1901-1902	John Shaw Billings
18.	1902-1903	James Kendall Hosmer
19.	1904-1905	Ernest C. Richardson
20.	1905-1906	Frank Pierce Hill
21.	1906-1907	Clement W. Andrews
22.	1907-1908	Arthur E. Bostwick
23.	1908-1909	Charles H. Gould
24.	1909-1910	N.D.C. Hodges
25.	1910-1911	James I. Wyer
26.	1911-1912	Theresa West Elmendorf
27.	1912-1913	Henry E. Legler

APPENDIX *(Cont.)*

28.	1913-1914	Edwin H. Anderson
29.	1914-1915	Hiller C. Wellman
30.	1915-1916	Mary Wright Plummer
31.	1916-1917	Walter L. Brown
32.	1917-1918	Thomas L. Montgomery
33.	1918-1919	William Warner Bishop
34.	1919-1920	Chalmers Hadley
35.	1920-1921	Alice S. Tyler
36.	1921-1922	Azariah Smith Root
37.	1922-1923	George B. Utley
38.	1923-1924	Judson T. Jennings
39.	1924-1925	Herman H.B. Meyer
40.	1925-1926	C.F.D. Belden
41.	1926-1927	George H. Locke
42.	1927-1928	Carl B. Roden
43.	1928-1929	Linda A. Eastman
44.	1929-1930	Andrew Keogh
45.	1930-1931	Adam Strohm
46.	1931-1932	Josephine A. Rathbone
47.	1932-1933	Harry Miller Lydenberg
48.	1933-1934	Gratia A. Countryman
49.	1934-1935	Charles H. Compton
50.	1935-1936	Louis Round Wilson
51.	1936-1937	Malcolm G. Wyer
52.	1937-1938	Harrison W. Craver
53.	1938-1939	Milton J. Ferguson
54.	1939-1940	Ralph Munn
55.	1940-1941	Essae M. Culver
56.	1941-1942	Charles H. Brown
57.	1942-1943	Keyes D. Metcalf
58.	1943-1944	Althea H. Warren
59.	1944-1945	Carl Vitz
60.	1945-1946	Ralph A. Ulveling
61.	1946-1947	Mary U. Rothrock
62.	1947-1948	Paul North Rice
63.	1948-1949	E.W. McDiarmid
64.	1949-1950	Milton E. Lord
65.	1950-1951	Clarence R. Graham
66.	1951-1952	Loleta Dawson Fyan
67.	1952-1953	Robert B. Downs
68.	1953-1954	Flora Belle Ludington
69.	1954-1955	L. Quincy Mumford
70.	1955-1956	John S. Richards
71.	1956-1957	Ralph R. Shaw
72.	1957-1958	Lucile D. Morsch
73.	1958-1959	Emerson Greenaway
74.	1959-1960	Benjamin E. Powell
75.	1960-1961	Frances Lander Spain
76.	1961-1962	Florrinell F. Morton

APPENDIX *(Cont.)*

77.	1962-1963	James E. Bryan
78.	1963-1964	Frederick H. Wagman
79.	1964-1965	Edwin Castagna
80.	1965-1966	Robert Vosper
81.	1966-1967	Mary Gaver
82.	1967-1968	Foster E. Mohrhardt
83.	1968-1969	Roger McDonough
84.	1969-1970	William S. Dix
85.	1970-1971	Lillian M. Bradshaw
86.	1971-1972	Keith Doms
87.	1972-1973	Katherine Laich
88.	1973-1974	Jean E. Lowrie
89.	1974-1975	Edward G. Holley
90.	1975-1976	Allie Beth Martin
91.	1976-1977	Clara Stanton Jones
92.	1977-1978	Eric Moon
93.	1978-1979	Russell Shank
94.	1979-1980	Thomas J. Galvin
95.	1980-1981	Peggy A. Sullivan
96.	1981-1982	Elizabeth W. Stone
97.	1982-1983	Carol A. Nemeyer
98.	1983-1984	Brooke E. Sheldon
99.	1984-1985	E.J. Josey
100.	1985-1986	Beverly P. Lynch

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5. The authors would here like to thank Dr. Charles Seavey for his assistance in designing the survey and for collecting much of the data which resulted from it. Without the data, this study would not have been possible.

6. Geographical distributions adapted from the divisional composition of regions used by the Bureau of the Census throughout this 110-year period. See U.S. Bureau of the Census. *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*. Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1975, p. 4.

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VITAE

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